

Annotated IS/EA Format Instructions for Use

How and Why Was This Format Developed?

This format was developed to help in the preparation of documents addressing both the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). A statewide team, consisting of FHWA, headquarters, and district staff developed the format. It has also been reviewed by FHWA, Legal, and Environmental (technical and generalist) staff statewide.

When Do I Need to Use This Format?

This format must be used for Department projects requiring the preparation of a joint Initial Study/Environmental Assessment (IS/EA). Local agencies are strongly encouraged to use this format when preparing an IS/EA for local assistance projects.

What if I'm Preparing a CEQA-Only Initial Study?

Use of this format is not mandated for CEQA-only initial studies; however, some of the information in this format may be helpful when preparing a CEQA-only IS. This format is not intended to prohibit the use of “focused” or “checklist” initial studies in proper circumstances, such as when an initial study is needed to obtain necessary approvals by the California Department of Fish and Game.

How Do I Use This Format?

The first 4 pages of the format comprise a “clickable” outline. Clicking on underlined text in these pages will take you to the applicable section in the larger document. For example, if you just want to read the cultural resources section of the format, click on “Cultural Resources” on page 3 and that link will take you to the full discussion of cultural resources found on page 42.

Page 5 to the end of the document contains the heart of the IS/EA format—detailed guidance on how to write each section of an IS/EA.

What Are the Colors All About?

The team developed a color-coding system to help the user decipher what text is guidance, what text is sample text, and what text is boilerplate. Here's the color key:

Black Text:	Headings
Blue Text:	Guidance
Purple Text:	Sample Text
Red Text:	Boilerplate (text to be cut and pasted directly from the format into the environmental document)

This Format is 90+ Pages Long—Does that Mean that All IS/EAs are Now Going to Be 90+ Pages Long?!

No! An IS/EA does not need to discuss every issue covered in this format; it must discuss only those issues that are truly relevant to the project. For example, if there are no waters within the project limits, do not include a section discussing wetlands and waters.

Are There Efforts Underway to Make This More User-Friendly?

YES! Eventually this format will operate as a roll-up document so that all 90+ pages are not displayed at once. Also, work is underway to make the individual sections of the format more consistent with one another.

Who Can I Contact If I Have Questions or Comments on This Format?

If you have questions, comments, suggestions for improvements, you can contact Kelly Dunlap, Sr. Environmental Planner, by phone at (916) 651-8164 or by e-mail at Kelly.dunlap@dot.ca.gov, or your DEA Coordinator:

District 4:

Cindy Adams, DEA Coordinator
Department of Transportation
Division of Environmental Analysis, MS 27
Sacramento, CA 95814
Phone (916) 653-3171

Central Region:

Katrina Pierce, DEA Coordinator
Department of Transportation
Division of Environmental Analysis, MS 27
Sacramento, CA 95814
Phone (916) 653-8907

Districts 7, 8, 11, and 12:

Susanne Glasgow, DEA Coordinator
Department of Transportation
5252 Viewridge Court
San Diego, CA 92123
Phone (858) 616-6617

North Region:

Dale Jones, DEA Coordinator
Department of Transportation
Division of Environmental Analysis, MS 27
Sacramento, CA 95814
Phone (916) 654-5300